

# socialist standard

January 2015  
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## This machine makes profits

### Capitalism's child labour



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Mitchell  
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# socialist standard

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# Introducing The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity

to make new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our

ideas across, the more experiences we will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

**If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.**



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JANUARY 2015

## Editorial

### Hopes for the New Year?

JANUARY 2015, the start of another year. Time for looking back on past failures and for promising ourselves we will do better in the future. Do politicians indulge themselves in this game? Perhaps they do, but if so, it would give us scant reason to hope that a better future was in prospect for the working class.

Back in 2010, the Tories promised to eliminate the structural deficit by the next election, to be the greenest government ever, and to ensure that the NHS would be 'safe in our hands'. They promised a 'Big Society' (remember that?) which would give power back to the people and encourage individual enterprise. They said they would rescue working people from the benefit trap by making work pay. Later they promised to replace every council house sold with a new, 'affordable' home. At the last election, did the British working class trust the Tories and Lib Dems to keep their politicians promises? Did they believe such promises would make their lives better in future? Or did they merely react against the long list of failed pledges made by the previous Labour governments: to keep debt stable, to keep inflation down, to cut youth unemployment, to borrow only to invest, not to raise income tax. Did not Brown, in fact, assure us of increased prosperity; did he not tell us that he had beaten back the trade cycle and there would never be mass unemployment again?

Failure to keep promises is a defining mark of all governments pledged to run capitalism. Sometimes such failures are the result of opportunistic manoeuvring (the

Lib Dem's promise not to raise tuition fees comes easily to mind). Sometimes the promises themselves are no more than convenient lies, bait to catch unwary voters, or balm to sooth working-class anger or pacify their resistance. But when all the parliamentary squabbling and finger-pointing is done, the fundamental underlying cause of such failures is not the stupidity or greed or ignorance of politicians but the workings of capitalism. The economic system, a tightly-woven web of social and legal relationships driven by profit, is its own master, following its own anarchic way, ceaselessly undermining the attempts of governments and corporations to tame or control it.

Perhaps the politicians, servants of capital, eventually come to believe their own promises – it often seems that a capacity for self-deception is a hallmark of a successful career in parliament. But whatever motives lurk behind politicians' eyes whenever the glib promises come tumbling out of their mouths, capitalism will have its way with them. And it will have its way with us, too, the working class. It was never set up to meet our needs or to fulfil our hopes or dreams. It was not designed to provide for the fulfilment of humanity as a whole.

Whatever hope this new year may bring, it will not lie in the prospect of working people finally electing a capitalist political party that can keep its promises, for unless it is promising us further exploitation, conflict and unfulfilled hopes, such a party does not, and cannot, exist.

## Doing something for nothing

A NEW year ought to start with a good news story, so here's one you may have seen recently – global malaria deaths are down by 50 percent in the last ten years, according to the World Health Organisation (*BBC Online*, 9 December).

In Africa, home to 90 percent of malaria fatalities, cases have declined by 25 percent even though the population has increased by 43 percent. 50 percent of those at risk now have mosquito nets, compared to just 3 percent ten years ago. There is more diagnostic testing, more people are getting treatment, and a number of tropical countries have for the first time been able to report and maintain zero cases.

Obviously there is much more to be done. For one thing, many people in rural areas are still out of reach of treatment. Many children still die unnecessarily. 43 percent of pregnant women receive no preventative medicine. 3.2 billion people remain at risk, and with global warming, disease zones are spreading north to higher latitudes. There were still around 207 million cases in 2012, with a WHO estimate of between 473,000 and 789,000 deaths, mostly among the under-fives. At the low end of the estimate, that's still close to one child a minute, all year. While Bob Geldof and his band of conceited and condescending millionaire celebs invite us to care as much as they do about the Ebola epidemic (suggested lyric: 'Let's all cure it in the New Year, or else we'll get it over here...'), malaria has been quietly going about its business of causing around 100 times more fatalities with zero media coverage.

Even so there's no doubt that this is a success story in healthcare among the world's poor countries, and especially so in the context of a global social and economic system which is not famous for giving a monkey's about poor people and their problems. How come we see this rare buck in the general trend of doom and gloom? Is it just an anomaly, the exception that proves the rule?

Socialists often describe capitalism as a nasty, brutish and uncaring system, but this is perhaps somewhat loose and idiomatic talk. What we are doing is reifying and even carelessly anthropomorphising what is, after all, nothing more than a set of abstract and inherited rules. It doesn't mean that the people who live in capitalism are necessarily nasty, brutish and uncaring. Of course, some of them are, for example the sort of money-grubbing scumbags who are responsible for the estimated 40 percent of counterfeit malaria drugs now circulating in China and South-East Asia. But often people are quite the opposite. It says something very positive about humans that so many are able to cope under a divisive economic system where they have every reason to be in conflict with each other, but somehow fail to turn into Hobbsean stereotypes. People care, even though capitalism says they shouldn't because there's no money in caring. They try to help, even when there's no profit incentive. They pull together, even when there's no bottom line, no cash return, no angle. It's not that humans are angels, but living in capitalist economic hell you might expect to see a lot more devils.

Scientifically speaking, capitalism could have wiped out malaria worldwide back in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, just as it did in the southern states of the USA and southern Europe, where it had been endemic for centuries. This new success is therefore not a victory for the capitalist system as such, but a victory for concerned people and groups within and despite the capitalist system. Some of those groups are NGOs, some government-backed, some private philanthropists, like the Gates Foundation. Above all, it's a victory for the unsung volunteers who don't make the papers, don't walk the red carpets and don't release bleeding-heart pop songs, but who do ninety percent of the work behind the scenes.

People don't realise how much work volunteers do, in a

society that laughs at the idea of working for free. In September last year Andy Haldane, the chief economist of the Bank of England, stated that volunteers in Britain do the work of an equivalent 1.2m employees, a figure only slightly smaller than the total workforce of the NHS (*Economist*, 12 September). The Office of National Statistics estimates that frequent, formal volunteering in the UK generates around £24 billion of economic output, roughly twice that of the agricultural sector. Add in infrequent, informal types of volunteering and the total amounts to £50 billion, equal to the UK energy sector (*Wall Street Journal* blog, 12 September). Globally, voluntary work is done by almost a billion people, close to the population of China, and much of that in war-zones, disaster sites and disease belts. A 2011 report by the International Red Cross commented on the largely volunteer-driven 2000 Global Polio Initiative which the United Nations described as 'far beyond the reach of governments or international and national organizations' (*ifrc.org*).

One way to think of socialism is as a global volunteering effort, systematised as the norm rather than the exception. Opponents of socialist ideas are very quick to argue that in a free society where there is no property or money, people would be too lazy or selfish to work for free, although typically they never include themselves in this assessment. What's ironic about this mean-spirited myopia is that, with a present-day volunteer force approximately the size of China, we could easily run the essential global productive services of socialism, right now, without a single extra person stepping forward. To take agriculture as an example of how technology has made this possible, 'From 90% of the US workforce in 1790, the percentage in the field dropped to roughly 50% in 1890 and is now less than 2%. Yet, the US farm production breaks records every year' (ARK investment at *seekingalpha.com*, 26 September). Similar productivity trends are expected in India and China, and the same applies to manufacturing, where the US tops the global manufacturing tables with just 9 percent of its workforce. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics gives 2012 figures of 3.9 percent for construction and just 0.6 percent for mining, with a whopping 80 percent being employed in government or service industries, a very large proportion of which would be unnecessary in socialism (*bls.gov*). And there is also the matter of work inside the home. According to UN statistics, 'In all regions, women spend at least twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic work' (*unstats.un.org*). Taking these factors together, it's obvious that in capitalism a huge amount of useful and necessary work is unpaid while only a fraction of the paid work is what could be described as useful or necessary in socialist terms. As a rough calculation, if the global workforce is something like 3 billion today, and if only 20 percent do useful work by this definition, then not only could today's global volunteer force run socialism, they could do it in a 24 hour week even if every former tax inspector, sales 'executive', benefit advisor and check-out assistant sat back and made no effort to help.

Far more likely of course, given their sudden liberty from bosses and wage-bondage as well as a free democratic voice and free access to what was available, such people would be falling over themselves to lend a hand, especially given the opportunity for once to do something actually important and worthwhile. Capitalism has never been able to conquer human beings' basic sense of decency despite every effort and incentive. What will happen when it is unleashed in all its force can only be guessed at, and with socialism we'll get a chance to see it in action. **PJS**





# Are Socialists **Sadists**?

*It is two hundred years since the Marquis de Sade died – we examine his political ideas.*

On 2 December 2nd, 1814 Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, the Marquis de Sade, died in an insane asylum. The words 'sadism' and 'sadist' are derived from his name. De Sade was incarcerated for about 32 years of his life (including ten years in the Bastille), often without access to the courts. During the French Revolution he was an elected delegate to the National Convention. He was given the task of reviewing sanitation in the hospitals. These were terrible places but thanks to de Sade, individual beds were given to each and every patient, whereas formerly one was obliged to share, sleeping alongside the dying and the dead in one bed. De Sade forced the hospital authorities to transform the clinics and hospitals into places fit for patients. He was also given the task of overseeing the renaming of the streets of Paris, abolishing the Christian names, renaming them after republican heroes, for example, Rue Spartacus.

He began to challenge the efforts by the new masters of France to sabotage democratic measures. But democracy was to be overtaken swiftly by The Terror. Unlike the English Jacobins (of the London Corresponding Society etc), the French Jacobins were not the representatives of the still weak and relatively new working class. They represented the petite-bourgeoisie. Only 6 percent of those passing beneath the guillotine during the Jacobin regime were aristocrats. The rest were minor clergy and workers, 80 percent of victims being manual labourers. The nascent workers' movement was silenced by Robespierre, and not later.

As regards prison and the death penalty, de Sade was opposed to every form of punishment: 'It is far simpler to hang men than to find out why we condemn them.' Again and again he spoke for the release of those brought before the tribunal, and never once would he allow himself to vote for the death penalty. Finally, having stormed out of the tribunal, he wrote to his

friend Gaufridy: 'They wanted me to put through a bestial and bloody resolution, which I couldn't do.' Then toward the end of the year 1793 they came for Citizen de Sade himself. He was pencilled in to be guillotined but avoided that fate by the good fortune of having been transferred to another prison. When Napoleon Bonaparte became military dictator de Sade's temporary liberty ended and without any trial he was thrown into political prison once more, before being sent to an asylum.

De Sade held no illusions about the natural goodness of man, but he believed that with complete economic and sexual equality human conditions could be greatly bettered. He went far beyond the 'advanced' social thinkers of his time and even of the present day. One of his earlier biographers Geoffrey Gorer, who wrote *The Revolutionary Ideas of the Marquis De Sade*, pointed out that Sade was in complete opposition to contemporary philosophers for both his 'complete and continual denial of the right to property,' and for viewing the struggle in late 18th century French society as being not between 'the Crown, the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy or the clergy, or sectional interests of any of these against one another', but rather all of these 'more or less united against the proletariat.' Gorer argued, 'he can with some justice be called the first reasoned socialist.'

Socialists say that society is divided into two antagonistic classes, the haves and the have-nots. This point is so fundamental for de Sade that he stresses it in every book. His definition of class can hardly be improved: 'Don't think that I mean by the people the caste called the tiers-etat [bourgeoisie in the limited sense]; no, I mean by the people ... those who can only get a living by their labour and sweat'. In his *Aline et Valcour* the good king Zamé begins his description of his visit to Europe by saying:

'Everywhere I could reduce men into two classes both equally pitiable;

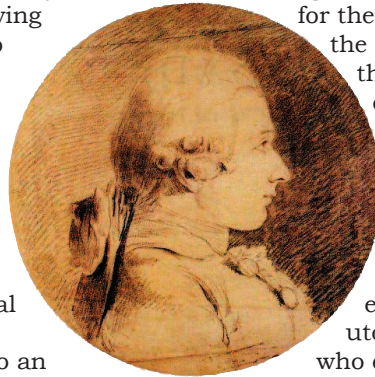
in the one the rich who was the slave of his pleasures; in the other the unhappy victims of fortune; and I never found in the former the desire to be better or in the latter the possibility of becoming so, as though both classes were working for their common misery...; I saw the rich continually increasing the chains of the poor, while doubling his own luxury, while the poor, insulted and despised by the other, did not even receive the encouragement necessary to bear his burden. I demanded equality and was told it was utopian; but I soon saw those who denied its possibility were those who would lose by it...'

This is the beginning of a treatise on the class-war by the extremely savage Bishop of Grenoble who declaims 'That is the [lower] class that I would abandon to perpetual chains and humiliation ... all others ought to join together against this abject class ... to fasten chains upon them, since they in their turn will be enchained if they relax.'

On theft, de Sade wrote that the oath taken by the nation with respect to the law of property is ridiculous: 'How can you expect the man who has nothing to honour a law which protects the man who has everything? It is his duty, surely, to attempt to redress the balance!' Property is itself theft, he says. The thief proposes a law to punish theft against himself, the original thief, and expects those with no other recourse than theft to respect such a law! Laws against theft are therefore absurd.'

Gorer, in his book, explains: 'This distinction of classes is founded on property; and with unaccustomed epigrammatic terseness De Sade defined property as 'a crime committed by the rich against the poor ... theft is only punished because it attacks the right of property; but that right is in itself a theft, so that the law punishes theft because it attacks theft.'

On leadership, de Sade had this to say: 'you can only govern men by deceiving them; one must be hypocritical to deceive them; the enlightened man will never let himself be led, therefore it is



**Continued on page 18**

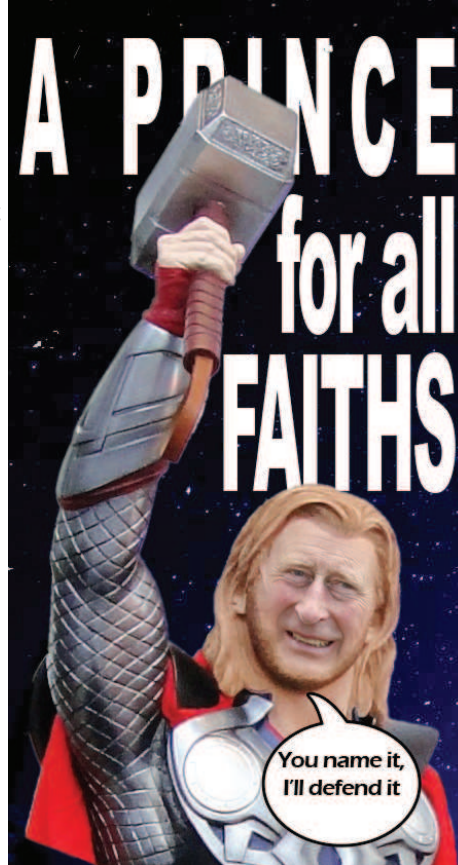


## Defending the indefensible

HRH PRINCE Charles, Prince of Wales, Earl of Chester, Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, Lord of the Isles, etc. etc. is obviously a man with a liking for job titles, and his collection so far is only overshadowed by the collection of military medals and uniforms he wears to go with them. And, despite his less than impressive record of any actual employment so far he's looking forward to getting a new one.

'Defender of faith' he wants to be known as rather than 'Defender of *the* faith' when the family business, consisting of travelling around the world waving at the natives, is finally handed to him. And this makes perfect sense. The current title seems to imply that there's only one faith that needs defending, whereas of course, they're all at each other's throats, and so need defending from each other. There's also the fact that he and his chums who collectively own the planet don't give a sod *which* faith the proles go for, as long as they can be kept in a state of obedient, religious stupor by believing in one of them.

In the good old days, of course, the gods were omnipotent and could easily defend themselves. Thor had a ruddy great hammer to show who was boss and Zeus was known for hurling thunderbolts at anyone who crossed his path. But now, it seems, they need a mortal to consult with and advise them on the defence of their various faiths. And Charlie, the man who has devoted so much of his life to talking to plants and studying quack herbal remedies is apparently uniquely qualified to do it.



And now someone is taking his wish to become 'defender of faith' to all the gods seriously. Lord Harries, a former Bishop of Oxford, and a 'leading CofE liberal thinker' according to the *Daily Mail* (28 November) suggests that Charles's coronation service should be opened with a reading from the Koran. Unsurprisingly, many of his colleagues strongly disagree.

In any event, one passage it may be wise to avoid will be Surah 5 verse 51: 'O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is one of them. Lo! Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk'.

Lord Harries is sure, however, that it would be 'a creative act of accommodation' and make Muslims feel 'embraced' by the nation. Whether some of the more extreme Islamists of Isis, for example, who want an Islamic state and prefer to deal with those of a different persuasion by beheading them feel the need to be 'embraced' or have their faith 'defended' by the new King Charlie of the UK is another matter.

A report on the *World Bulletin* website (11 November) suggests that in Egypt, at least, panicking Moslems and Christians are being forced to join forces to fight what they see as a new danger: a 'growing trend of atheism' which has 'alarmed the country's religious institutions'. It seems that since the 2011 uprising many young Egyptians have begun to openly declare their atheist views.

Strange, isn't it, that after being divided for centuries by their religions it's the rejection of religion that's getting them together? Funny old world isn't it? Perhaps now that they've found this new understanding they can tell us which god is the real one, and which the imposter.

**NW**

## Too much ado about: Primitive fables, hallucinations, dreams, myths

Every race, nation, tribe had/has its portion of these, the Zezuru, Zulu, Xhosa, Nyanja, Sena (Southern Africa) are no exception but, sadly unlike the Jews, Greeks, Romans etc, literacy came much too late to this region. Add the inferiority complex, the psychological defeat and awe of the conqueror. How can the subdued, timid, submissive, inferior native ever have confidence in himself or his defeated elder? Moreover, the aforementioned aliens have their myths well written down.

The local myths are not written down to date... our ancestors when hungry, would just go under a tree, clap their hands, tell the creator their needs and immediately food presented to them... that their neighbour can go from Harare to London and back within 3 hours in a rusero (winnowing tray) – an

aeroplane takes two days – and in most cases a person alleged to have such mystical powers is among the poorest and cannot point to Harare, let alone London, on a map.

But after consulting some prophet such a person might be axed to death. 'Our daughter was doing very well in England until that their witch made the "visitation" ... So, any wonder that people who can believe such silly tales are very cheap prey to the highly propagated, highly mystified Jesus who is but forever coming yesterday! The everlasting lie of course! While most Africans, due to wishful thinking are convinced by the silly eternal lie, in Zim in 2001, at 3.00 o'clock on 15 June (or was it 3rd June) and again (was it 9 December 2002) at 9.00 am, the much criticised scientists accurately forecast the eclipse of the sun, the exact date, the exact hour and duration. Which of the biblical wafflings has come true?

Poor backward Africa! While the West, Russia and China have learnt that all phenomena considered mysterious and transcendental can be mathematically and scientifically

proved or disproved, the majority of Africans are still (in mentality) in the era of the Christian believers who shun reality, like the condemners of the Galileo Group. As such, as Galileo said that recanting would never make the Earth flat, the Jews were never wrong for dismissing the Christ Myth. And, like all dead people, he will not arise. In fact the catch trick (to fool weak minds, the timid and gullible) is in (a) John 14:19, (b) Acts 1:6, 10, 11.

Anyway, by saying that such utterances are from God (and not from cunning, dogmatic/despotic humans) are you (Christians) not depicting the same kind of loving/fair God as worse than a primitive ritualist (sacrificing his only son to end sin which has since multiplied) a tribalist, a liar who did not even know that before the 21st century there would be no more war of horses and swords but missiles from the Pentagon, Sandhurst, Seoul etc?

**GODWIN HATITYE, HARARE,  
ZIMBABWE**





## Another reform goes wrong

WHEN THE Chancellor announced in his Autumn Statement that stamp duty on buying a house was being reformed, to reduce it on most purchases while increasing it on the most expensive, he claimed that this reform would benefit 98 per cent of house-buyers. The assumption was that as this tax was being reduced, the price of houses would also fall.

The Chairman of the Office for Budgetary Responsibility, Robert Chote, however, warned 'the reform could put up prices in some areas, predicting that they would rise where the tax had fallen and fall where it had risen.'

This paradoxical effect is what happens when something for sale is taxed in a sellers' market as one where demand exceeds supply. This, in fact, is the logic behind the taxes on tobacco, alcohol and petrol. By regulating sales the government creates an artificial sellers' market which pushes up their price; it then taxes the surplus profits of the sellers. This situation can also arise without government intervention and is what Chote was predicting with regard to house prices.

John McDermott, in his 'Since You Asked' column in the *Financial Times* (6/7 December) elaborated. He has his questioner say 'I thought that lower taxes would mean buyers would pay less overall.' To which he replies:

'Of course prices will go up. The Office for Budgetary Responsibility, Britain's fiscal watchdog, estimates that for every 1 per cent fall in the effective rate of stamp duty, house prices rise 1.4 per cent, a house currently worth £300,000 would cost about £2,000 more under the new rates according to Shelter, a housing charity. When you lower transaction costs of any transaction, there will be more of those transactions. There will be lower transaction costs for 98 per cent of purchases, according to the OBR. In a market where there isn't a lot of supply, the extra demand will push up prices.'

That's how the market works. Sellers always charge what the market will bear at any time, irrespective of whether the tax on what they are selling goes up or down. If the tax goes up and the market won't bear an increase in price, then the tax falls on them. If, on the other hand, the tax is reduced and the market will still bear the same price as before, they won't pass the reduction on but keep the whole of it for themselves.

If again, as in this case, a tax reduction results in increased demand, this means the market will bear a higher price and the seller will increase the price. And vice versa, as with the higher stamp duty for the most expensive properties, this reduces demand for them forcing the seller to reduce their price.

This phenomenon was noted in the second issue of the *Socialist Standard* in October 1904 with regard to rates and the price of rented accommodation:

'When the Central London Railway was opened the competition for houses in Shepherd's Bush increased largely, and as a consequence rents rose as much as 3s. in the £. This was the limit offered for the time being, and when shortly after rates were raised by a good sum, the rents remained unaltered. At West Ham, which is the most heavily rated district in England, rents are falling, while rates are rising, owing to the decreased demand for houses.'

In any event, taxes on items that workers consume to recreate their labour-power, in so far as they increase or decrease the price of these items, exert, respectively, an upward or a downward pressure on wages. It's just that, in the field of housing, reforms have a habit of not working out as planned.

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REVEALING DEVELOPMENTS are going on at the moment on the world energy market. Coal has seen its price halved in the past year. The price of oil has fallen, by more than 40 percent since June, when it was \$115 a barrel. It is now below \$70. This comes after nearly five years of stability and some oil-producing countries want the OPEC cartel to restrict production so as to put up prices. The question being asked is why Saudi Arabia hasn't cut back production as they have done in the past. There are, of course, a number of conspiracy theories.

According to the *Economist*, curbing output to once again raise its price would benefit Iran and Russia, which Saudi Arabia does not want to happen. More likely, but not necessarily solely, the reason this is being opposed by Saudi Arabia is that it wants to keep the price low so as to discourage fracking. Saudi Arabia can tolerate lower oil prices quite easily for quite a while. It has \$900 billion in reserves. Its own oil costs very little (around \$5-6 per barrel) to get out of the ground. Low prices stem investment in other sources of oil, such as Canada's tar sands or America's shale, and this means more demand for low-cost 'dirtier' coal in future.

The US is producing over 3 million barrels a day more than it did several years ago. And it is fracking that is doing it. According to the Institute for Energy Research 'Nearly every barrel of new U.S. oil production can be attributed to the use of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing technologies.'

In fact, the International Energy Agency has predicted that the United States will produce more oil next year than Saudi Arabia; the US might even pass Russia, which, at ten million barrels a day, is the world's biggest producer. The US already produces more natural gas than Russia.

Over the past four years, as the price hovered around \$110 a barrel, US corporations set about extracting oil from shale formations previously considered unviable. Their manic drilling—they have completed perhaps 20,000 new wells since 2010, more than ten times Saudi Arabia's tally—has boosted America's oil production by a third, to nearly 9m barrels a day, just a 1m b/d short of Saudi Arabia's output. US domestic demand has apparently plateaued so this extra production is going on to the world market.

The boss of Continental Resources, Harold Hamm (whose fortune has dropped by \$11 billion since July), has said he can cope as long as the oil price is above \$50. Stephen Chazen, who runs Occidental Petroleum, has said the industry is 'not healthy' below \$70.

The pain of this competition will be borne more by those new

players who wish to enter the industry as many companies in the UK seek to do. Wells that are already producing oil or gas are extraordinarily profitable, because most of the costs are sunk. But the output of shale wells declines rapidly, by 60-70 percent in their first year, so within a couple of years this oil will stop flowing. It is far less clear if the industry can profitably invest in new wells to maintain or boost production. With their revenues now dropping fast, they will find themselves overstretched. A rash of bankruptcies is likely.

Nevertheless, the global oil economy, despite the 'green' goals, will be around for several decades. As two green pundits note pertinently:

'The largest companies in the energy industry have concluded that policymakers are unlikely to act quickly enough to strand their current fossil fuel assets or make it unprofitable for them to continue exploring for new reserves. The oil and gas sector, in particular, is gambling on a business-as-usual model that projects out to a roughly \$14 trillion investment in new reserves by 2035. This investment would correspond to a staggering amount of wasted capital should policymakers decide that these reserves cannot be burned' (thehill.com, 9 December).

What this shows is the impossibility of a rational energy policy under capitalism as energy use under it reflects the relative prices of the various sources (coal, oil, gas, shale oil, etc) and changes as they vary. It highlights the utopianism of those environmentalists who think that shaping the market is a solution. There are just too many variables, most of them market-driven. Prices of fossil fuels collapse, demand for them then starts to rise and the market need for alternative sources such as renewables falls. But when prices for fossil fuels rise other fossil fuel sources then become profitable. Either way there is no significant reduction in the burning of fossil fuels and so no reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

There's also a lesson for those who want to campaign against the use of fracking under capitalism. They should be careful what they wish for. They may get fracking slowed but not replaced by renewable sources as these are too costly, with a movement instead towards . . . oil and coal.

We can concede that the present oil price war poses more questions than answers as the game is played. In the end, who knows how it will pan out? But, unlike those green economists, we never claimed that capitalism can be predictable or offer the solutions to climate change. We were never delusional enough to believe capitalism had the answers.

ALJO





# Who are you calling a pleb?

at the very centre of British government, being petulant and obstructive when he refused to allow a man with a bicycle to wheel it through the main gate? Was he telling the truth when he said that the cyclist abruptly responded with a word which, even without being backed up in abusive swearing, was cruelly offensive? Was it so urgent that the cyclist should not be delayed because he was going to one of London's most exclusive clubs? And during those three years why did so many participants in the incident appear to change their minds about what happened?

## High Court Judgment

The matter eventually came to a head with the conclusion of a libel case at the High Court in late November 2014 when Mr Justice Mitting ruled that Andrew Mitchell MP, ex-Minister of International Development, ex-Government Chief Whip, had behaved 'childishly' when he told PC Toby Rowland at the Downing Street gates that he, and the other police officers on duty there, were 'fucking plebs'. The judge did not accept Mitchell's defence that Rowland had made that up; his opinion, in the coldest terms, was that Rowland was not capable of anything so subtle and effective: he was '...not the sort of man who would have had the wit, imagination or inclination to invent on the spur of the moment an account of what a senior politician had said to him in a temper'. So Mitchell lost his libel case, which landed him with a massive debt starting at £300,000 but which could run into millions.

## Politically Toxic

Perhaps to emphasise the basis for his decision, Mitting chose to describe the word 'Plebs' as 'politically toxic'. That may not be universally agreed; for what about that adjectival word which apparently Mitchell often uses, and which he uttered before 'pleb', which may be considered to be the more toxic – more aggressive, more emphatic, more friendly to being spat at a victim (one of the facts to emerge from the libel hearings was that there had been 16 recorded incidents of Mitchell clashing with the police in Westminster, including one which involved a direct insult). In comparison 'pleb' is the less pejorative word, easier to use in exasperation rather than anger. It is a shortened version of 'plebeian' for the underdogs – the more common people – of ancient Rome, expanded to cover anyone behaving in a coarse or vulgar manner. In the case of Mitchell there is more to it than that. He was a pupil at Rugby School, where he attained the exalted rank of a prefect known, for his harshly disciplinarian manner, as 'Slasher'. Among the privileged toffs of Rugby it was common for the non-teaching staff to be known, contemptuously, as plebs. At Jesus College in Cambridge, where Mitchell went after Rugby, the word was used for workers such as cleaners, porters and 'townies'.

FOR MORE than three years the nation was gripped in paralysing uncertainty. Was that policeman, standing on guard on 19 September 2012

## Tirades

After Cambridge Mitchell had been employed as a trader at the merchant bank Lazards, making a great deal of money for himself before becoming an MP. He became notorious for his short temper and his abusive tirades against his staff. 'He could be cantankerous and aggressive' said one of his Ministry staff '...a horrible person to do business with.' Although in some cases 'business' was what he was ready to 'do'. For example there was the situation when, according to the Tory journalist Simon Heffer – one of his admirers – when he was International Development Secretary Mitchell agreed to some £500 million being paid to 'consultancy' firms which resulted in some handsome payouts within the firms. All in all, it was no coincidence that when he was embroiled in the stresses of Plebgate he had so little support from the other Tories (it was said that he kept a list of those he considered to be unreliable in that respect) that it was inevitable that Cameron sacked him.

## Poverty

So far Mitchell has not expanded on his concept of what he calls 'plebs'. We know that they are the lower, in the sense of the exploited, class in society to the extent that it is permissible for ex-public school pupils to regard them with contempt. But he overlooks the fact that other members of the government prefer to adopt a more subtle and patronising – if equally contemptuous – attitude, describing them as 'hard-working people', when a more appropriate term would be 'long suffering'. For example in 2011/12 according to the Joseph Rowntree Trust – who are heavily experienced in this field – there were 13 million of those 'hard working' ones in poverty, with a million of them being paid below the official living wage.

## Oceania

In this matter there is an instructive irony in George Orwell's novel *1984*, first published in 1949. In his bleak probe into the future, Orwell suggests a world divided into three super powers, constantly at war with each other while ruthlessly imposing a class society of meticulously unrelenting exploitation. In the state of Oceania the lower class is known not as 'plebs' but 'proles' – the different root of which does not relieve the misery of their lives. Even the music they are allowed is prepared for them at the Ministry of Truth on a kind of kaleidoscope known as a versificator. The central character of the book, Winston Smith, feels he is almost alone in being aware of the situation. It is his belief that If There Is Hope It Lies With The Proles – until he is taken in by the Thought Police to learn to love Big Brother.

Purged of his expletives, Mitchell began his tirade against Rowland with the advice that 'Best you learn your...place. You don't run this...government'. It would indeed be progressive if the lower class in society, exploited and ridiculed as plebs or proles or hard working, took heed of this advice in the sense of understanding their position and the reasons for it and the universal problems which ensue from it. That would be the beginning of the end of all the negatives associated with capitalist society. And it would not need a Minister of the crown or a high court judge or a police officer.

IVAN



Above: Andrew Mitchell.  
Right: Jesus College





# Little Children Suffer

*We examine the history and current situation regarding child labour.*

Labour by young children was at the heart of capitalism from the start. Factory production was preceded by domestic industry, whereby small-scale manufacturing took place in workers' homes; this included the textile industries, where the earliest examples of factories arose. Working in their own homes, handloom weavers could have their children, perhaps as young as four, working alongside them. Down to the 1820s a cotton spinner working in a factory would often have his wife and children working with him, thus preserving the family group. Workers generally saw this last as a positive point, even in the unpleasant conditions of the early factories. Even after families working together in factories declined, children continued to work there. In 1851 there were 600,000 children under fifteen working in England, Wales and Scotland, including 180,000 in textile factories, 130,000 in agriculture and 38,000 in mines. Toiling in such unhealthy environments naturally led to many children suffering health problems, such as curvature of the spine, not to mention the lack of any decent education to speak of and little time or opportunity to play.

As a specific example, from 1813 George Courtauld employed girls, and some boys, aged ten upwards, as apprentices at his silk mill in Braintree. They came from London workhouses, and he paid the workhouse for each child. The children signed a contract that committed them to work at the mill till they were twenty-one. The company went on to become one of the world's largest producers of artificial fibres.

Child labour was generally seen (by the wealthy, at least) as something entirely natural and unexceptionable, though various objections on moral grounds were made. Others saw it as socially advantageous, since idleness on the part of children was supposedly the road to criminality. There grew up a tension between the desire of some members of the capitalist class for abundant

cheap unskilled labour power in factories, which children could provide, and the increasing need for workers with some basic education in terms of literacy and numeracy. Consequently the British Parliament introduced a number of Factory Acts to regulate working hours for children and women, the provision of education and various basic safety measures.

The 1802 Act limited the working hours for apprentices and required them to receive some form of instruction. More significant was the Act of 1833, which prohibited the employment of under-eighteens at night in textile factories. Children (defined as those aged nine to thirteen) could work a maximum of nine hours a day, and young persons (aged thirteen to eighteen) a maximum of twelve. Children could not work in textile mills, except in silk mills (where foreign competition was a problem). Similar regulations were gradually extended to other industries, such as to bleaching and dyeing works in 1860.

The 1870 Elementary Education Act made school attendance compulsory in England and Wales between the ages of five and thirteen, but only in areas where there was a School Board which decided to introduce this. In 1878 the 'half-time' system was set up: children under ten could not be employed in factories and those under thirteen were required to split their time between school and employment.

Incidentally, Karl Marx was quite keen on a combination of work and education, mentioning that factory inspectors felt that this made each more congenial to the child than limiting them to just one. And he looked forward to 'the education of the future, an education that will in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics ... the only method of producing fully developed human beings' (*Capital*, vol 1, ch 15, sec 9). Much would depend, of course, on the age of the child and the kind of labour involved.

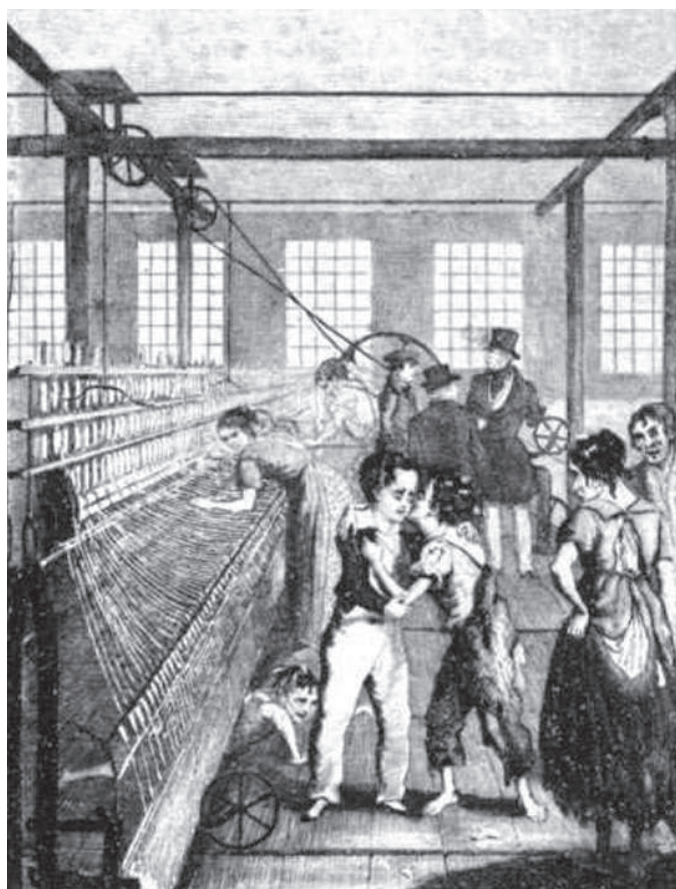


Further restrictions on children working were introduced in the first part of the twentieth century, together with further requirements for education. The 1918 Education Act put an end to the half-time system, though not immediately. In 1935 the Conservative government produced an Education Bill that would raise the school leaving age from fourteen to fifteen; but it allowed children to leave at fourteen if they had 'beneficial' employment. Many poorer workers needed the wages of their fourteen-year-old children, while many employers wanted the cheap labour power involved. One MP, the Duchess of Atholl, noted in the parliamentary debate on the bill that some work in textile factories required 'small fingers', and that excluding fourteen-year-olds would mean 'placing a very serious handicap on one of our most important export industries ... not one of our great commercial competitors in Europe has raised the school-leaving age to 15'. The Second World War prevented implementation of the Act, and children left school at fourteen until 1947. In the early fifties there were some proposals to put the leaving age back to fourteen again, but nothing came of these. It was eventually raised to sixteen in 1972.

And what of the current situation? It might be thought that children toiling in sweatshops and so on is a thing of the past. After all, even those who want an absolute minimum of government interference in the economy will generally agree that laws prohibiting child labour are acceptable. Surely capitalism in

**Left: child labour in modern India. Below: 18th century mill workers. Right: child miners, 19th century**

(this figure is taken from the International Labour Organization (ILO) website, which contains a lot of relevant information: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)). In an echo of early capitalism, child workers mostly take part in unpaid work for their family, rather than being in paid employment. In sub-Saharan Africa, roughly one child in four is a child labourer. Furthermore, child labour is in no way confined to the poorest countries; one estimate from 2000 was that 300,000 children were working illegally in the US, and 2.5 million globally in 'developed countries', though such figures have to be taken with a large pinch of salt. In addition many child workers in developing countries work in effect for multinational companies, often via subsidiaries much earlier in the supply chain.



the twenty-first century has no need to employ children? In fact, globally child labour remains widespread.

The minimum age for employment varies across countries, being as low as fourteen in some places, with eighteen as a common minimum for hazardous work. But legal requirements are often ignored in the name of profit. Though the number is declining, 168 million children are reportedly still involved in child labour

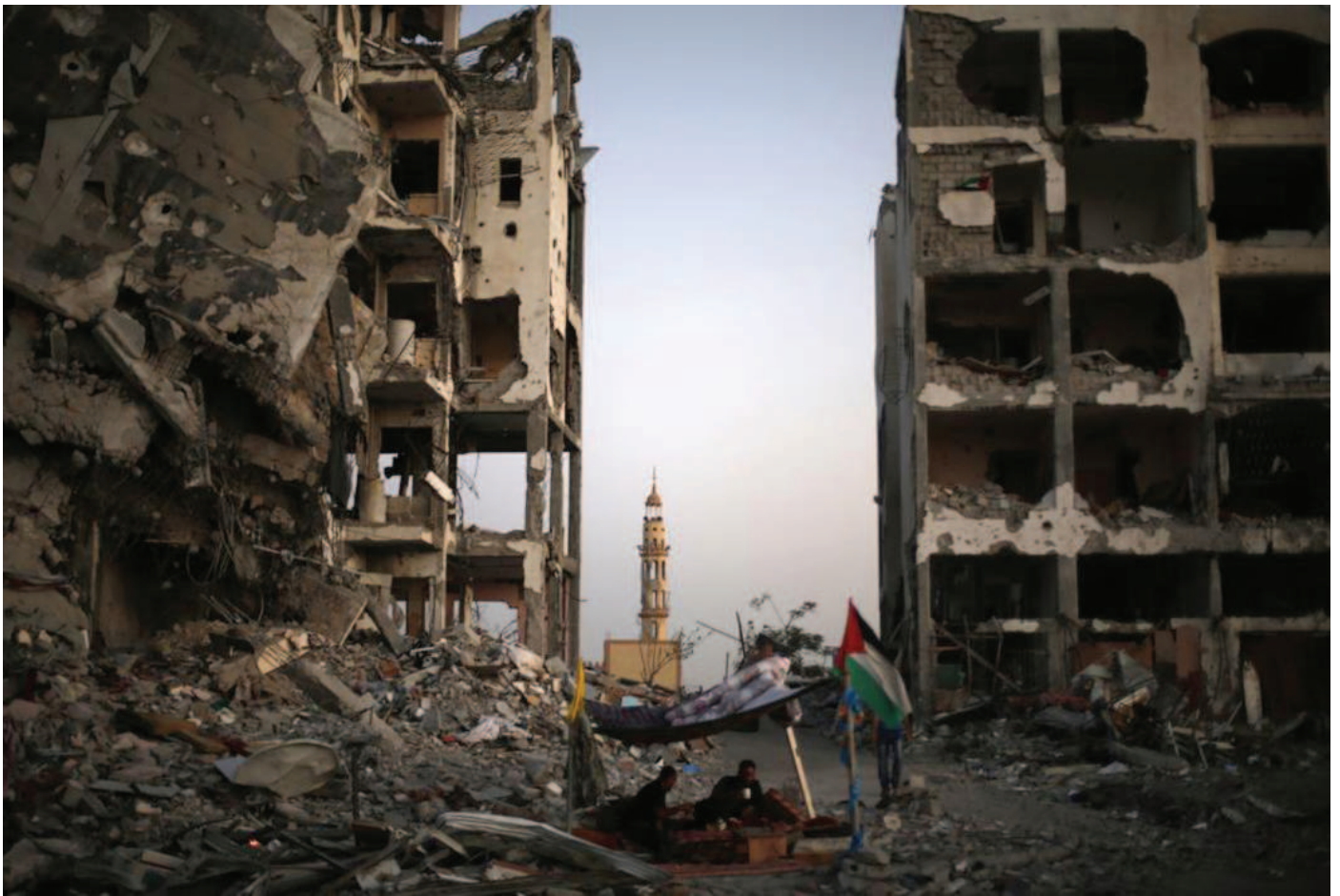
Over half of the 168 million are in hazardous work, defined as work which 'jeopardises the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out'. The very worst forms include trafficking, debt bondage, compulsory recruitment to armies, prostitution, pornography and drug smuggling.

Even mining and quarrying still employ around a million children, working deep underground in tiny tunnels, pounding boulders or using toxic substances such as mercury; this is primarily in informal, small-scale, often family-based operations. An ILO report from 2007 found that girls did not take part in underground extraction work, but could be used to transport rubble and pan for precious stones or gold. In Peru some girls as young as ten could work twelve hours a day in bars that served the mining community, leaving them open to physical and sexual abuse.

The ILO runs an International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, which has the goal of ending the worst forms by 2016, but it is accepted that even this limited aim will not be met. The ILO has promulgated various conventions on child labour, and many countries have ratified these, but of course this does not imply that any significant action will be undertaken. In October 2013 the Third Global Conference on Child Labour was held in Brasilia: this produced a Declaration which noted that 'child labour impairs the realisation of children's rights and its eradication constitutes an important issue for development and human rights'. It speaks further of encouraging this and promoting that and strengthening something else, but it fails to recognise that child labour and its associated horrors will continue as long as global capitalism enforces widespread poverty, employers benefit from the employment of children, and the poorest workers and peasants have to resort to putting children to work in an attempt to relieve their own poverty.

**PAUL BENNETT**





# The war in Gaza

*The concluding part of our series on capitalism's ongoing wars*

**T**he Israeli-Palestine war in Gaza last year was yet another round of fighting in a conflict that began in 1948 when the state of Israel was established. The Palestinians have no chance whatsoever of militarily overcoming Israel. Israel's economic might with its GDP of around \$110 billion overshadows the Palestinian GDP of \$4.2 billion.

In the 50-day military operation by Israel against the Palestinian people in Gaza in July to September 2014, 2,199 Gazans were killed, 70 percent of them civilians, 10,895 were wounded and 65,000 people left homeless. A third of hospitals were destroyed or damaged. Mufeed al-Hasayneh, Minister of Public Works, said Israel's offensive on Gaza has caused over \$5 billion of damage to homes and infrastructure. Some 10,000 homes have been completely destroyed, and 30,000 homes partially destroyed. In Shujaiyya, where some 110,000 people live, 60 percent of the homes were completely

destroyed (*Ma'an News Agency*, 5 August 2014). The tunnels between Gaza and Egypt which were bringing \$700 million into Gaza's economy through goods or services were destroyed by bombing.

Israel destroyed 134 Gazan factories, and bombed Gaza's main power station. Without power to run treatment plants, untreated sewage was dumped directly into the Mediterranean Sea contaminating fish and sickening fishermen. The Food and Agriculture Organization reported that extensive damage to Gaza's agricultural sector had 'forced farmers and herders to abandon their lands and has paralysed fishing activities, bringing local food production to a halt and severely affecting livelihoods.' Losses among Gaza's fishing sector were estimated at 234.6 tons, or about 9.3 percent of the yearly catch. Farming gives a livelihood to 19,000 Gazans, while 6,000 people work in livestock raising and 3,600 in the fishing industry. The Israeli military also killed

cows and camels. The FAO report went on to say 'The recent fighting has resulted in substantial direct damage to Gaza's 17,000 hectares of crop lands as well as much of its agricultural infrastructure, including greenhouses, irrigation systems, animal farms, fodder stocks and fishing boats' (*Ma'an News Agency*, 16 August 2014). Gaza factory owner Mohammad al-Telbani said 'This is a war on our economy' (*Guardian*, 22 August 2014).

## **Capitalist development**

Palestinian capitalist development in Gaza is fettered by the Israeli state. The Gaza Strip was occupied by Israel from 1967 until 2005 but has been under siege by Israel since then. Gaza has a population of 1.8 million Palestinians, and over half of these are children who live in one of the most densely populated areas in the world. The Israeli blockade means the borders and airspace are controlled by Israel so that foodstuffs, building materials, fuel and medical



supplies have to be brought in via tunnels between Gaza and Egypt. Even livestock is transported through these tunnels. The fishing industry is restricted to within 3 km of land and thus 85 percent of its fishing waters are inaccessible due to Israeli imposed restrictions. As for farmland 35 percent of Gaza's farmland is inaccessible, and farmers are unable to get pesticides, fertilizers needed for their crops or permits from the Israeli government to export what they

and Israeli companies.

The founders of the Israeli state in 1948 forced into exile about 800,000 Palestinian people in what is known as the 'Al-Naqba' or 'catastrophe' which was compounded in 1967 when a further 325,000 Palestinians became refugees. The 1948 UN Resolution 194 states Palestinians have the right to return to their homes. Today over 6 million Palestinians live as refugees, hundreds of thousands of whom still

Israel is the most economically and socially developed capitalist nation state in the Middle East with a large working class. It is a bourgeois democracy but also a sectarian state. Israeli capitalism not only exploits the Jewish working class but also a Palestinian working class and migrant labour. Palestinians in the state of Israel comprise 20 percent of the population and face discrimination, and are considered to be second class citizens because the very definition of a Jewish state excludes them.

According to the OECD '21 percent of Israelis live in poverty, the highest among developed countries that are part of the OECD' (*Haaretz*, 15 May 2013). At the bottom of the economic pyramid are the African migrants from Eritrea and the Sudan who cannot legally work but are used as cheap labour in hotel, restaurant and cleaning companies, and when arrested are put in detention centres such as the one in the Negev desert. Next there are the Bedouin Arabs who live in unrecognized villages unconnected to water and electricity systems. The 2005 National Insurance Institute reported that 52 percent of Palestinians in Israel lived below the poverty line as opposed to 16 percent of Jewish Israelis, and unemployment averages more than 50 percent for Palestinians (*Sawt el-Amel: The Laborer's Voice*, 2006). In 2011, the average monthly salary of Ashkenazi Jews was 33 percent above the average, whereas the monthly salary for urban Palestinian citizens was the exact opposite: 33 percent below the average (*Oligarchy in the Holy Land*, 3 December 2013).

The Palestinian struggle for their own capitalist state was controlled for decades by Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) which are bourgeois, secular, 'leftist' Pan-Arab nationalists but they came to a dead end after years of conflict with the Israeli state. In the 1990s Fatah collaborated with the Israeli government which would lead to the rise of Hamas in Gaza. Essentially the Palestinian Authority controlled by Fatah could not meet the basic economic needs of the Palestinian people, and this led to the success of Hamas in the Gazan elections of 2006.

### Hamas

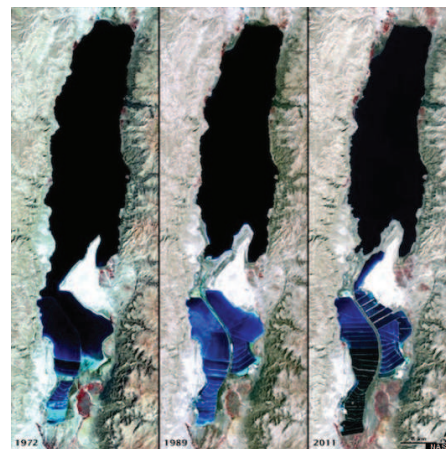
Hamas, also a bourgeois nationalist organization, was established in 1987, and proposes an Islamist capitalist Palestinian state based on a 1947 Palestine. Hamas is an abbreviation for 'Islamic resistance movement' but also means 'force



Above: Palestinian refugees in 1948.  
Right: how the Dead Sea has dried up from 1972 to 2011

manage to produce.

Even the historical symbol of the Levant, the olive tree, has come under attack from the Israeli state. Thousands of olive trees have been cut down, devastating the Palestinian economy, and some of the ancient trees are dug up and transported to Israel and abroad for sale. The Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights reports that 'since 1967 Israeli authorities have uprooted or destroyed more than one and a half million trees, 70 percent of which were olive trees, the staple crop of Palestinian rural communities' (*Middle East Monitor*, 2010). Olives are the lifeblood of Palestinian agriculture, almost the only crop which grows on the stony hillsides of the West Bank without irrigation. Palestinian agriculture and people have always depended on the water of lakes and springs in the fertile hills of the West Bank as well as the Jordan river. Since 1967, these water sources have been taken into the control of Israel, which has drained lakes near Tiberias and rerouted the Jordan river to take the water to Israel. One of the results is the drying up of the Dead Sea. Palestinians are now having to buy back their water from settlements



live in overcrowded refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza, and in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

### Zionism

Emma Goldman in her 1938 work *On Zionism* identified 'Zionism as the dream of capitalist Jewry the world over for a Jewish State with all its trimmings, such as Government, laws, police, militarism and the rest. In other words, a Jewish State machinery to protect the privileges of the few against the many.' The founders of Israel sought to expel as much of the Arab majority as they could and make their profits by creating an almost all-Jewish working class in the mistaken belief 'it is better to be exploited by one's fellow countrymen' (Marx 1848).



and bravery' and has its origins in the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Hamas are not only anti-Zionist but also anti-Semitic, and are trying to bridge the divide that separated Palestinian nationalism and Islamism, a twin track policy of a national liberation struggle and a jihad which aims 'to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine' (*Covenant of the Hamas*, 1988). Hamas are wealthy because they have rich backers from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states such as Qatar.

and Fatah, to isolate Hamas and punish Fatah for the rapprochement? But even Fatah entered the conflict in July 2014 with missiles launched against Israel by Fatah in the West Bank. Amin Maqbool, Secretary-General of Fatah's Revolutionary Council said Palestinians were united against the Israeli assault: 'We all know that the main Israeli goal has been to break up the national unity reconciliation. We will respond by strengthening our unity and reconciliation' (*Palestine Pulse*,

public awareness of the minority ownership of the economy developing. For instance, in 2009 Israel's central bank stated in its annual report that 'some twenty business groups, nearly all of family nature and structured in a pronounced pyramid form, continue to control a large proportion of public firms (some 25 per cent of firms listed for trading) and about half of market share' (*Renewal: A journal of social democracy*, January 2012).

The summer 2011 social justice



**IDF tanks near the border with the Gaza Strip on August 2, 2014**

The Palestinian working class are organized in the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) which is a Fatah organization that has not had any elections since 1981. The rise of the Federation of Independent and Democratic Trade Unions & Workers' Committees in Palestine, representing workers in independent, democratically-elected unions and workers' committees across the West Bank and Gaza has threatened the Fatah PGFTU. After a protest outside the Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza in 2005, the PGFTU asked the Palestinian security services to investigate the Independent Workers' Committees Federation and the Democracy and Workers' Rights Center.

The split in the Palestinian bourgeoisie between Fatah and Hamas suits the Israeli state but in April 2014 Israel became very angry at the reconciliation deal agreed between Fatah and Hamas, and threatened to withhold tax revenues it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. Was the offensive against Gaza last year an Israeli attempt to sabotage the deal between Hamas

10 July 2014). Israel's anger was evident when it said 'The moderate Palestinian leadership has shown its true colours. It sides with the terrorists, not with Israel' (*Arutz Sheva*, 16 July 2014).

After the war last summer, in September 2014 Fatah and Hamas reached an agreement that would turn over the civil administration of Gaza immediately to officials of a Palestinian unity government which would attempt to ease the long blockade of Gaza by Israel and Egypt and open the way to reconstruction of Gaza. Jibril Rajoub, a senior official in Fatah announced 'Fatah and Hamas have reached a comprehensive agreement for the unity government to return to the Gaza Strip' (*Al-Arabiya*, 25 September 2014).

### **Nationalism divides**

Both Zionism and Palestinian nationalism hold back the growth of class consciousness among the working class in Israel and Palestine but something extraordinary occurred in the summer of 2011 during the social justice protests in Israel inspired by the 'Arab Spring.' In Israel there was an increasing

protests that erupted helped unite the Jewish and Palestinian working class in Israel. Jewish working class activists signed a covenant of cooperation with the Palestinian activists and they chanted mixed Hebrew and Arabic renditions of slogans from Tahrir Square. Arab writer Odeh Bisharat addressed a meeting of 300,000 people and announced that the struggle for social justice has always been the struggle of the Arab community, and the people shouted 'Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies' (*The New Significance*, 17 August 2011). For a brief time that summer the

Israeli and Palestinian working class saw itself as a class.

Emma Goldman claimed the origin of the Arab-Israeli war stemmed from the fact that 'the Arab feudal lords had sold the land to the Jews without the knowledge of the Arab people.'

Goldman concluded that 'the land should belong to those who till the soil', in other words, the Jewish and Palestinian working class regardless of religion and national identity in a socialist society of common ownership and democratic control.

**STEVE CLAYTON**



# A page of history:

## the 1834 Canut revolt in Lyon

Last year was the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1834 Canut revolt in Lyon. Engels had described the earlier Canut revolt in 1831 as ‘the first working-class rising’ (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*) in the early years of the modern capitalist period. In October last year the OECD released its study *How Was Life? Global Well-Being Since 1820* which concluded that ‘global income inequality has returned to levels recorded in the 1820s – when the Industrial Revolution produced sizeable wealth gaps between the rich and poor’ (*Common Dreams*, 2 October). This study was shortly followed by the Credit Suisse *Global Wealth Report 2014* which stated that ‘the richest 1 percent of the world’s population own more than 48 percent of global wealth’ (*Guardian*, 14 October).

It is said that modern capitalism was born in 1825 after Britain revoked its law against joint-stock companies (the 1720 Bubble Act), Britain had gone on the Gold Standard in 1821, the business cycle began, and the ‘Panic of 1825’ was the start of modern economic cycles and crises. It was the first international economic crisis occurring in peacetime.

Capitalism imprisoned the working class in either workhouses, the ‘bastilles of the proletariat’ or in the factory described by Marx as ‘The House of Terror... realised a few years later in the shape of a gigantic Workhouse for the industrial worker... called the Factory’ (*Capital*). The 1832 ‘Great’ Reform Act did not extend the franchise to the working class, and when on 16 October 1834 (180 years ago) the Palace of Westminster (House of Commons) burned down, the people cheered in the street.

In France at this time during Louis Philippe’s reign of 1830-48, a very small portion of the bourgeoisie ruled the kingdom, the July monarchy gave freedom to the industrial, commercial and financial bourgeoisie, enriching the bourgeoisie and attacking the working class who were attempting to organise themselves. Greed was at the heart of French capitalism typified in Prime Minister Guizot’s



slogan ‘Enrichissez-vous’ (Enrich yourselves) from ‘Enrichissez-vous par le travail, par l’épargne et par la probité’ (Enrich yourselves by work, saving and probity) (*Liberty-Tree.ca*), and artist Honoré Daumier caricatured the bourgeoisie perceiving the meanness and mediocrity of the bourgeois class. Marx pointed out that ‘the July monarchy was nothing other than a joint stock company for the exploitation of France’s national wealth’ (*The Class Struggles in France*) while republican Lamartine worried that ‘the proletarian question is one that will cause the terrible explosion in present-day society, if society and government decline to fathom and resolve it’ (*War and Peace in an Age of Upheaval*).

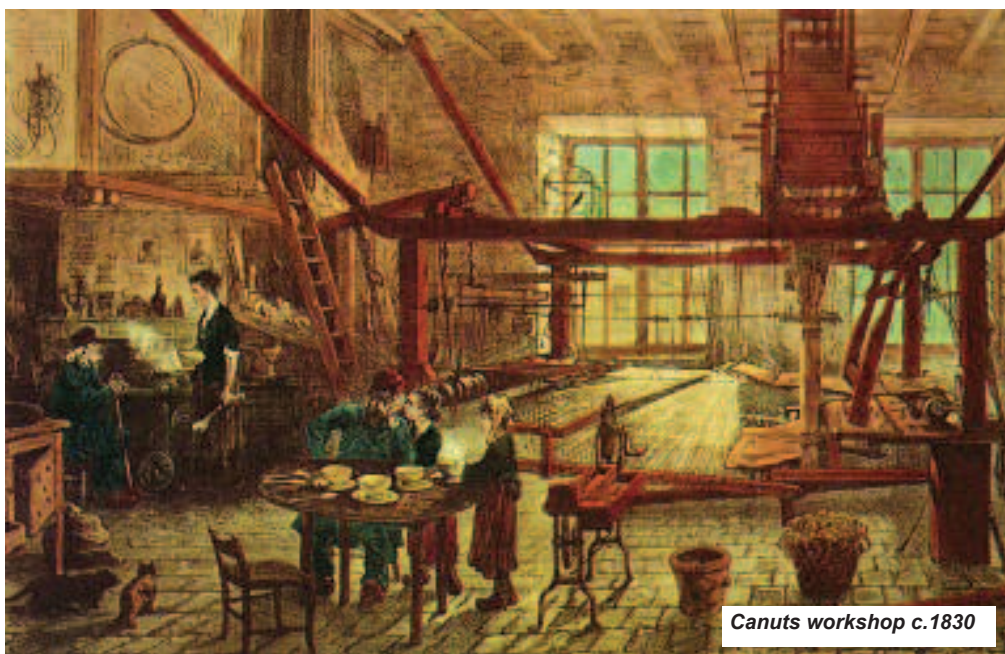
### Silk Weavers

In Lyon, the second city of France, the main industry was textiles in particular the silk weaving industry which had begun in Lyon in the fifteenth century, and would become the capital of the European silk trade. By the middle of the seventeenth century over 14,000 looms were in use in Lyon spinning the silk from the silk worms in the mulberry trees grown in the departments of Drôme, Gard, Vaucluse, and Ardèche. By 1830 Lyon had a population of 133,000 people, of which 25 percent worked in the ‘Fabrique’. Silk and silk-related products accounted for half of Lyon’s total commercial income and a third of the value of all French exports.

The Lyonnais silk weavers were known as ‘Canuts’ which probably derives from ‘canette’, a spool used in silk weaving. The Canuts worked on huge Jacquard mechanical looms in poor working conditions largely in the Croix-Rousse neighbourhood. The Jacquard loom was introduced after 1801 and greatly benefited silk production although for the worker it was expensive and enormous: it needed its own building with extra high ceilings and reinforced floors. The Canut lived and worked in the same building as the loom, and the weaver bore the costs of maintaining the loom. There were about 8,000 chief weaving craftsmen (Canuts), and 30,000 apprentices, women, and errand boys who lived and worked with the Canuts, everybody working 14 to 18 hours a day in buildings lacking ventilation.

The Lyonnais bourgeois class of silk manufacturers and bankers were known as ‘fabricants’ and numbered about 1,400. They, through the ‘Fabrique’ governed the Lyonnais silk trade, and contracted with the Canuts for a specific order or per price. The Fabrique had a raft of anti-worker regulations such as in wage disputes, the employer’s word was taken without question while workers had to prove wrongdoing, and also associations (ie. trade unions) of more than 20 workers were prohibited. One hated regulation was that ‘each worker was required by law to carry a booklet called a ‘livret’, in which his or her employer kept notes on the terms of service, personal conduct, debts





Canuts workshop c.1830

etc' (*Silk in Lyons* Erika Budde). The Fabrique also wanted to abolish the professional requirements (apprenticeships) to be a 'master weaver' so anyone who could afford a loom could become one. The Canuts had a thriving working class culture with a great emphasis on education; 'by the late 1700s, 70 percent of male silk workers were literate' (Budde), and Lyon had two workers newspapers. Marx wrote that 'the working-class, stunned at first by the noise and turmoil of the new system of production, recovered, in some measure, its senses, its resistance began' (*Capital*).

In 1831 there was competition from imported English silk which led to price decreases, the economy was in a downturn, and the Canuts struggled to maintain an adequate standard of living. The Canuts wanted a minimum price for silk which was refused by the Lyonnais bourgeoisie. In October 1831 the Canuts seized the arsenal and repulsed the local National Guard with a slogan of 'vivre libre en travaillant ou mourir en combattant!' (live free working or die fighting!). This was the first working class uprising in modern capitalism. The revolt was quickly suppressed by Napoleonic officer Marshal Soult with 20,000 soldiers, and with little bloodshed. Engels identified that 'the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front' (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*).

The Lyonnais bourgeoisie refused to set a tariff, a fixed minimum, statutory wage for the Canut silk weavers which they had had during the Napoleonic Empire. In 1833-34 the Lyonnais silk industry was booming, and Canut wages had increased which led the Comte

bourgeoisie sought to lower the wages of the Canuts which caused a general strike in Lyon in February 1834. The Canut leaders of employees' benevolent associations such as Medailles de la Societe de Secours Mutuels des Ouvriers de Sole (Silkworkers Provident Society) were arrested and sent for trial in April.

### Bloody repression

At the same time as the Canut leaders were on trial, the French parliament was discussing restrictions on republican groups, collective bargaining and the rights of association for workers. This anti-working class legislation was passed on 9 April 1834. On the same day the Canuts

took over parts of Lyon, erecting barricades, raiding the barracks and taking arms from the arsenal. The National Guard were forced to evacuate the town.



Canuts Jacquard loom



The Canuts adopted the French Republican Calendar, 9 April 1834 becoming Germinal 22, Year XLII of the Republic in homage to the 1789 great bourgeois French Revolution. This revolution did not solve the socio-economic problems facing the working class in France. The Canut revolt was not a political revolt but an economic one, at this time the franchise being limited to the bourgeois class.

The bourgeois class strategy under the leadership of Thiers, the Interior Minister, was to abandon Lyon to the Canut rebels, surround it and then retake it, a tactic again used by Thiers against the working class in the 1871 Paris Commune. Thiers was a resolute enemy of the working class, described eloquently by Marx as 'that monstrous gnome, [who] has charmed the French bourgeoisie for almost half a century, because he is the most consummate intellectual expression of their own class corruption... consistent only in his greed for wealth and his hatred of the men that produce it' (*The Civil War in France*). Thiers had Lyon subjected to artillery bombardment then had the army retake the town between 11 and 15 April during what became known as 'sanglante semaine' (bloody week). The Canut revolt was crushed with 600 workers, men, women and children killed by the army and police and 10,000 workers imprisoned or deported to the colonies.

The bourgeois class were just practising their revenge on the working class which would find fulfilment in the 1848 June Days in Paris when 10,000 workers were either killed or injured, while over 4,000 were deported to Algeria. All this pales compared to the suppression of the 1871 Paris Commune when 30,000 communards were killed by a vicious bourgeoisie. The capitalist class is ruthless when they feel threatened in their minority ownership of property and capital.

The Canut revolt of 1834 as the first major working class uprising in modern capitalism signifies that 'philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat' (Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*) but the lessons of the 1834 Canut revolt were not learned by the working class for several decades. Engels pointed out in a letter to Paul Lafargue of 11 March 1892 that 'the era of barricades and street fighting has gone for good; if the

military fight, resistance becomes madness.'

### Engels on street fighting

Engels summarised the nineteenth century of working class street fighting in his 1895 Introduction to Marx's *The Class Struggles in France*: 'rebellion in the old style, street fighting with barricades, which decided the issue everywhere up to 1848, had become largely outdated... everywhere the bourgeoisie had thrown in its lot with governments... and feasted the military moving against insurrection. The barricade had lost its magic; the soldier no

longer saw behind it the 'people' but rebels, subversives, plunderers, levellers, the scum of society; the officer had in the course of time become versed in the tactical forms of street fighting, he no longer marched straight ahead and without cover against the improvised breastwork, but went round it through gardens, yards and houses.'

In the same essay Engels saw 'with this successful utilization of universal suffrage, however, an entirely new method of proletarian struggle came into operation, and this method quickly took on a more tangible form' with organised working class political parties such as the German Social Democratic Party, and from 1904 the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Since control of parliament is obtained via elections based on universal suffrage, a socialist majority can win control of the machinery of government and the state through winning a parliamentary majority via the ballot box. The state is the institution with the power to employ socially-sanctioned physical force, it is an expression of and enforcer of class society. On the eve of a socialist election victory, the working class would already be convinced of the need for socialism and would have organised themselves in parties, unions, councils and other bodies ready to keep production and administration going, and socialist ideas would also have penetrated into the armed forces. If die-hard capitalists attempted a coup against a socialist majority, the armed forces would tend to side with those who have the undisputed democratic legitimacy, ie. those who want socialism. Even anarchists concede that 'the majority of military personnel are working class, and however indoctrinated they are, we doubt that they will be prepared on the whole to shoot down their friends, neighbours and relatives' (*Beyond Resistance*).

As socialists we remember the working class struggles of yesteryear such as the Canut revolt of 1834. Slavoj Žižek paraphrasing Walter Benjamin says 'the authentic revolution is not only directed towards the future but it redeems the past failed revolutions. All the ghosts as it were; the living dead of the past revolution, which are roaming around, unsatisfied will finally, find their home' (*The Perverts' Guide to Ideology*).

**STEVE CLAYTON**



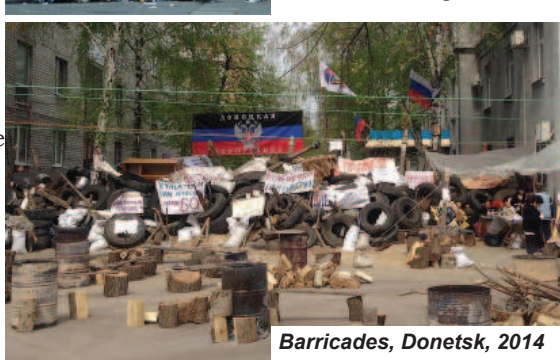
**Barricades, Berlin, 1848**



**Barricades, Prague, 1848**



**Barricades, Bangkok, 2010**



**Barricades, Donetsk, 2014**



## From page 5

necessary to deprive him of enlightenment to lead him as we want ...' Elsewhere, he says 'Politics, which teach men to deceive their equals without being deceived themselves, that science born of falseness and ambition, which the statesman calls a virtue, the social man a duty, and the honest man a vice ...'

Religion is summed up by his view 'When the strong wished to enslave the weak he persuaded him that a god had sanctified the chains with which he loaded him, and the latter, stupefied by misery, believed all he was told.' Blasphemy can only exist if God exists. If there is no God, then blasphemy and all other 'religious crimes' are likewise non-existent. So how can you have laws against them? If one, on the other hand, believes in a God, can he really believe his God to be so petty as to take offence at being calumniated? Such a God isn't worthy of honour'.

De Sade also condemned war, which he said sent the wrong message to those abroad whom we would wish likewise to follow our example and liberate themselves. It is not our job to make war on them, but to show them through our peaceful example what a free republic can and ought to be. He claimed war is simply public and authorised murder, in which hired men slaughter one another in the interests of tyrants: 'The sword is the weapon of him who is in the wrong, the commonest resource of ignorance and stupidity.'

As mentioned, de Sade was no supporter of capital punishment. He wrote: 'The state publicly honours those proficient in murder and encourages them. Yet it punishes the man who disposes of his enemy for a personal reason!' As for the death penalty, he writes: 'Either murder is a crime, or it is not. If it is not, why punish it? If it is, then by what perverse logic do you punish it by the same crime?' It also is tantamount to bad arithmetic, since 'now two people are dead instead of one!'

De Sade thought the greatest causes of misery were four things; private property, class distinctions, religion and family life. In the future societies he wrote of these institutions being abolished or transformed. In one section of *Aline and Valcour*, a brutal African kingdom is contrasted with the Pacific island utopian paradise of Tarnoé. He describes an imaginary island where all priests were banished, there were no temples and no vested interest in religion. There were also no professional lawyers and discussion of theology or law was punished as one of the gravest anti-social crimes. There was also no money.

Wherever you look in the world today you will find a parasitical minority suffering an embarrassment of riches while the toiling masses endure real and unnecessary pain as very much part of their everyday lives. The Marquis de Sade would find many examples of this obscenity in today's class divided society. De Sade may not have been a socialist as we would now define one, but a man of his times, though he perhaps ought to be remembered far more for raising important social questions than raising erections through his masturbatory sexual fantasies.

## ALJO

For more information see: A Brief Account of the Life of the Marquis De Sade by Anthony Walker  
<http://www.sade-ecrivain.com/docs/sade.html>



## Pie-crust pie-chart

DID YOU get one? The government propaganda sheet, that is, sent to some 24 million people recorded as paying income tax or national insurance on 'How your tax was spent in 2013-14'.

What stood out – and what you were expected to see standing out – was a huge slice of a pie-chart for 'welfare'. It amounts, if you do the arithmetic (which the propaganda sheet doesn't), to a quarter of the whole pie. How terrible, we are supposed to conclude, all that money going on welfare for scroungers who are too lazy to work.

However, imagine for a moment that we are living in a rationally-organised society, one geared to meeting people's needs, and that the pie-chart was measuring not money spent but real resources used. 'Welfare' would then be the goods and services consumed by or for certain people to ensure that they 'fared well'. But who are they?

The government propaganda sheet doesn't help but the Institute for Fiscal Studies does, in an article on their website 'What is welfare spending?' ([www.ifs.org.uk/publications/742](http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/742)). They break the 25 percent into 'personal social services' for people in care (4 percent), public service pensions (3 percent), other benefit spending on pensioners (4 percent) and other benefit spending on those of working age (14 percent).

So, 11 percent of the pie is going to people who have retired from work or people needing to be cared for, children and the disabled as well as the elderly. What's wrong with that? A rationally-organised society would certainly cater for the needs of people in this position and devote resources to this, in fact more than today though allocated on the basis of need and as of right rather than final or average salary or pensions contributions (if only because nobody would be working any longer for a wage or a salary).

That leaves 14 percent of the pie going to people under retirement age, but some of this will be going to people who are disabled or who are temporarily sick. That would still happen in a society geared to meeting people's needs. As to the able-bodied unemployed, they would no longer exist as everybody would be free to contribute work to society instead of being forced to be part of capitalism's industrial reserve army or be included in the 6 percent rate of unemployment that economists say is 'natural' under the market system.

But back to capitalism where what the pie-chart is showing is how capitalism distributes some of society's resources. Three other slices of the pie, amounting to nearly 17 percent, stand out as waste: national debt interest (7 percent), defence (5.3 percent) and criminal justice (4.4 percent). Talking of scroungers who contribute nothing, a good example is the capitalist holders of the national debt who are getting a much larger income than Job Seekers Allowance without having to work. The remaining nearly 9 percent goes to maintain the coercive part of the state machinery, which would not need to exist in socialism (for that's the rationally-organised society we're talking about) where only the non-coercive and non-financial parts of central administration would continue.

So, what the government propaganda sheet is unwittingly showing is how capitalism wastes society's resources and is not geared to meeting people's needs, ie. not catering for everybody's welfare. Thanks, Mr Osborne.

## Latest from Canada



## Fall 2014 issue

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# Our Big Land

*Our Big Land* by Romani writer Dan Allum was directed by Amy Hodge last

year at the Oval House Theatre in Kennington, London. It is a brutal, bloody and beautiful drama, a 'mystical, dark, epic poem' according to Allum (*InSuffolk*, 14 February 2014) which centres on the 'bauro diklo', a sacred storytelling/fortune-telling shawl passed from mothers to daughters which symbolises Romani spirit and culture.

The Romani matriarch Oceania is played by Robyn Moore who was memorable in 2003-04 in the working class TV soap opera *EastEnders*. Her son Roman is played by Samuel Edward-Cook, and Sophie, the Gadje (non-Romani) house dweller who is drawn into the world of the Romani as a child, is played by Scarlett Brookes. Allum puts women at the central place of the narrative as Oceania perceives in Sophie a 'gypsy heart', and we see Sophie grow from a girl to become a strong woman.

Allum was inspired by the memory of 'when I was

Sociologists have described the Romani as usually engaging in self-employment rather than the more common wage-labour of capitalist society, sometimes claiming 'the Gypsies history is also the history of their refusal to be proletarianised' (Judith Okely *The Traveller-Gypsies*), but Gypsies could also be classified as 'petty-bourgeois' under the Marxist definition as they work independently yet are 'dependent on a wider economy within which they circulate supplying goods, services and occasional labour' (Okely). It is also important to point out that 'Gypsies enter the market without the protections afforded non-Gypsies, often working in the alternative economy in casual employment' (Brian Belton, *Questioning Gypsy Identity: Ethnic Narratives in Britain*).

Oceania, Roman, and Sophie later face eviction from their land with bulldozers at the gate which evokes the tribulations of the Irish Traveller community at Dale Farm in Essex who had lived there from the 1980s to the 2011 eviction by bailiffs and riot police. The Dale Farm eviction took place at the same time as capitalist media stereotyping and misrepresentation of the Romani and the Irish Traveller community in 'reality' programmes such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. This prompted Billy Welch, spokesman for the Romani to say 'While Channel 4 should be praised for at least differentiating between Irish Travellers and Romani Gypsies, the first three episodes have in fact focused exclusively on Irish Travellers and their traditions: They called the show *Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and you've yet to see a Romani Gypsy in it' (*Guardian*, 7 February 2011).

Allum's play is defiant and proud with Oceania declaring 'the Romani Nation won't bend or break.' The Romani people need their strength to combat the hostility of capitalist society; at the 2012 Tory Party conference, Communities Secretary Eric Pickles demonised Romani and Traveller communities when he vowed to 'stop caravans in their tracks' (*Guardian*, 12 October 2012). In August 2013 Pickles declared 'I want all councils to be ready to take action straightaway to stop illegal camps and unauthorised sites' (*Inside Housing*, 9 August 2013). This follows the scrapping of diversity and equality guidance so that Romani and Travellers can be persecuted. It has been identified that 'there is a recognised national shortage of legal pitches for Gypsies and Travellers' (*Inside Housing*, 9 August 2013).

*Our Big Land* is clearly opportune, what with Pickles declaring war on the Romani, and also the Tory government and UKIP opposition to eastern European (aka Romani) immigration. And, in essence, the persecution of the Romani is 'camouflaging the failures of capitalism, particularly in times of economic slump, by seeking out scapegoats' (*Socialist Standard*, January 2014).

**STEVE CLAYTON**



a kid we used a camp in Essex and in the wood was a traveller mother and – no father. They wouldn't mix with the travellers and non-travellers. It was quite mysterious, and I never forgot about them' (Oval House programme February 2014).

During the early part of the play we hear the cautionary petty-bourgeois nursery rhyme for children; 'My mother said never to play with the gypsies in the woods and if I did she would say, naughty girl to disobey.' The Romani live in the forest apart from bourgeois society. Oceania refers to 'keys for a cage' which symbolise the capitalist fetish for home ownership and private property.

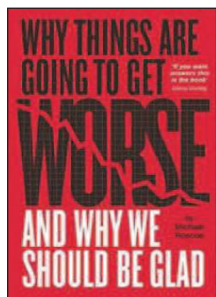
Bourgeois society fears the Romani, and the woods or forests where they live come to have supernatural powers which frighten bourgeois sensibilities. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 novel *The Scarlet Letter* set in Boston, Massachusetts in the 1640s, the woods for the Puritans become a symbol of darkness where the devil and his witches reside. The woods are the only place that Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne can meet away from the stern, repressive laws of Protestant society. Protestantism was a result of developing capitalism and was its ideological justification.

Oceania is dismissive when Sophie appears in her school uniform; 'uniforms are for prisons' and later says 'How can you understand freedom, when you've never had it?'



## Worse is better?

**Things are Going to Get Worse and Why We Should be Glad.** By Michael Roscoe. New Internationalist. £9.99.



The basic assumption of this book is one we can share: 'Real wealth creation requires real work, and real work must involve the transformation of nature's raw

materials into something of value to us humans. There is no other way to create wealth.' This is, of course, the basis of all labour theories of value including Marx's, even though wealth and value are not the same.

Roscoe argues that, as wealth can only be material, the service sector does not create any, but just consumes it, even if the service is useful and/or contributes indirectly to future material wealth production. Education, healthcare and various personal services do contribute to this by maintaining and improving the workforce that produces the actual wealth. Finance, on the other hand, says Roscoe, does not. It can play a useful role in channelling funds to the productive sector but most of its activities since the 1980s have just been shuffling money between speculators which doesn't help wealth production at all.

The growth of the service sector reflects the rise in productivity in the productive sector (agriculture, fishing, mining, manufacture and construction) over the years. The extra wealth produced has gone to maintain and expand the service sector, absorbing the workers displaced from the productive sector by rising productivity. Why, according to Roscoe, 'things are going to get worse' is that this can no longer continue because the service sector is being automated too (and oil is going to run out and the financial bubble is going to burst). As a result unemployment is going to grow until the system collapses. As 'it is only in times of crises that real change can be brought about', this is 'why we should be glad'. In other words, worse is better.

This may (or may not) be true, but Roscoe's 'real change' turns out not to be one. He wants to retain capitalism but modify it by government action, a return to the 'mixed economy' of before Thatcher

which he oxymoronically calls 'market socialism.' Actually, it's not quite a return to those days as one of the things he wants governments to do is to slow down growth (as it's using up the Earth's resources) by slowing down the rise in productivity. Given capitalism, that's like King Canute ordering the tide not to come in. It won't work and can't work because capitalism is a system of capital accumulation driven by competition between profit-seeking enterprises, both private and state, which imposes rising productivity and growth on them as the price of staying in business.

A disappointing book, then, which starts off making a good point but which ends up advocating an impossible reform of capitalism.

**ALB**

## Unseen and Unprotected

**Hsiao-Hung Pai: Invisible: Britain's Migrant Sex Workers.** Westbourne £10.99.



In *Chinese Whispers* (reviewed in the August 2010 *Socialist Standard*) Pai examined the living and working conditions of undocumented Chinese migrant workers in

Britain. Now she looks specifically at migrant sex workers, herself courageously working underground as a 'housekeeper' in several brothels.

About a quarter of the eighty thousand sex workers in Britain are immigrants, mostly from China or eastern and south-eastern Europe. There has been much economic disruption in these areas; women workers have been particularly badly hit by the closure of state-owned businesses in China, for instance. One solution, which is especially appealing for those with young children to bring up and educate, is to emigrate and then send remittances home. One Polish woman who Pai spoke to could earn as much in a day in a brothel in London as she could earn in a month in Katowice.

Not that most come intending to work in the sex industry. It's just that badly-paid and insecure work in agriculture, food-processing factories or restaurants is not enough

to support a family back home or to pay off the debts of those who were smuggled here illegally. As one madam tells Pai, 'No one would do this job if they weren't desperate.' They may be able to earn £300 a night, after paying part of their takings to the brothel-owner. One woman was returning to China, having earned £20,000 in four months.

But you would indeed need to be desperate to work up to fourteen hours a day, having sex with a dozen or more men, six or seven days a week. There is an ever-present fear of violence from customers or of being robbed. Whether prostitute, housekeeper or madam, there is no prospect of negotiating working hours or conditions. Illegal immigrants have great difficulty in accessing health care, including sexual health, and their poor English and social isolation often handicap them in this regard.

Further, many women are trafficked into Britain specifically for sex work. This seems to be particularly common among Romanian women and Pai mentions one woman smuggled here and then sold from one pimp to another for £2000.

The government's crackdown on undocumented migrants has led to sex workers from outside the European Union being driven further underground in order to avoid immigration controls and make themselves, in the book's title, invisible to the authorities.

**PB**

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## England Arise

**Written by Mick Martin. Directed by Jude Wright. Performed by Bent Architect. CAST, Doncaster.**



ONE OF the delights of the Art Scene in a town well away from a city is that you can appreciate a play without any of the distractions of celebrity culture on or off the stage. The play is what you get – pure and unvarnished.

This visit is the anniversary of the opening of Doncaster's new theatre CAST. Something significant is happening in this part of South Yorkshire and the theatre is beginning to grow audiences in a town where Art and Drama is often thought to be 'Not for people like us'. This is due in no small measure to CAST's Kully Thiarai's varied and imaginative programming. This is coupled, as in this production, with a mission to challenge the audiences.

This magnificent production, was challengingly programmed in Armistice week, a time of conflicting emotions, even for socialists.

The play immediately avoids the

trap of most agit-prop theatre, that of being strident with a developed hectoring tone directed at the audience. The cast, like in a Peter Brook play, have limited scenery and props. They use their acting skills which includes movement and musical ability.

The political and emotional lessons evolve through a well balanced script. The story is set in the run up to the Great War, and features two young men and two young women of the Clarion Socialist Sunday School in Huddersfield. The play illustrates their artistic and revolutionary activities. The play is inspired by the book, *Comrades in Conscience* by Cyril Pearce. It also draws on Jill Liddington's *Rebel Girls*. Set in Huddersfield, it uses first hand source material.

We are introduced to the Players by the Company. This draws us immediately into the drama. The emergence of the key element of Conscientious Objection emerges slowly and powerfully through the story line. This comprises the programme of plays, love affairs and all those elements that make up young people's lives everywhere. This gives greater potency to the inherent political messages that are conveyed. They flow from the story and do not develop into a harangue.

The sheer joy of living is disrupted and perverted by changing attitudes to the war by the establishment

.Volunteerism is no longer sufficient to fulfil the growing demands of this costly and brutal conflict. This impacts on all the four young people featured in this drama, the men being tortured in solitary confinement.

The following is also part of this tableau and impacts on the cast: the suffragette movement with its contradictions and splits, the compromises that political life demands of marriage, parental criticism, and, disappointingly the solace former revolutionaries find within bourgeois political parties.

No easy answers are provided by the play. However we as the audience are left to examine the dilemmas faced by these brave young revolutionaries. As we leave the theatre we need to examine what the lessons are for us to learn and influence our lives and the socialist future.

The important thing is to see this play –this is real theatre and not Shaftesbury Avenue shenanigans.

**JOHN WHEELER**

### **SOCIALIST STANDARD INDEX FOR 2013**

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## Do Have Nightmares

*CRIMEWATCH* HAS been a depressingly regular fixture on BBC1 for over 30 years. Its format has hardly changed

over the decades: reconstructions of violent offences, 'most wanted' mugshots, and grainy CCTV recordings of robberies and assaults, shown in the hope that viewers who know about them will phone in. Watching this can leave us with the uneasy feeling that masked attackers are stalking every street. Research in 2003 found that the programme increased the fear of crime in over half of its viewers, while a third said it left them feeling afraid. Even if it doesn't turn us paranoid, *Crimewatch* reminds us that society can make people alienated and desperate enough to commit the most brutal acts.

The reconstructions are shot with tense music, moody lighting and blurry scenes in slow-motion. These

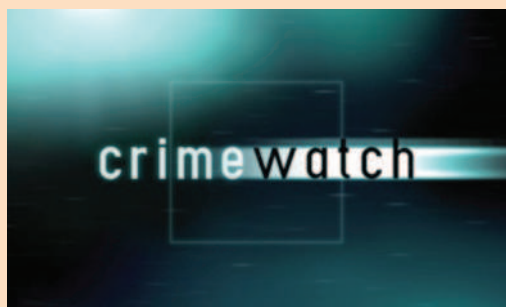
directorial gimmicks are familiar from every single crime drama littering our screens, but feel tasteless when they're used to depict real, horrific situations. Presumably, the producers of *Crimewatch* think that this approach is most likely to encourage people to call in. Conversely, the way the programme presents CCTV footage looks more like *You've Been Framed*. There is cheesy music and cheesier wordplay, such as the 'hamburglars' stealing from a fast

food joint getting '£15,000 to go'.

The show also features old investigations reopened because of 'failings' or 'significant mistakes in the police response' at the time. Today's police force is presented as much more efficient and precise, especially thanks to advances in DNA identification. The show is an

advertisement for the police's strength as much as it is an appeal for information. *Crimewatch*, like the police, only focuses on catching criminals. The state can do little else, as it can't remove the causes of violence built in to the society it defends.

**MIKE FOSTER**



## Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site:

<http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 18 January 2015 3.00pm.

'Homelessness and Health'

Speaker: Mike Foster

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.

### West London Branch

Tuesday 20 January 2015 8.00pm.

'I For One Welcome Our New Robot Overlords'

Speaker: Bill Martin

Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace,  
London W4 4JN.

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 25 January 2015 6.00pm.

Film: *We are Legion*

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 1 February 2015 3.00pm.

'Radical Feminism and Communism'

Speaker: Johnny Mercer

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 15 February 2015 3.00pm.

'Borders and Control: Migration under Capitalism'

Speaker: Paul Bennett

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN



### Yorkshire Regional Branch DAY SCHOOL 'From Capitalism to Socialism'

Saturday 21 February 2015 1.00pm to 5.00pm.

Speakers:

Johnny Mercer: 'Capitalism: How it works and its effects on human beings'  
Paul Bennett: 'Socialism: a Practical Possibility'

Adam Buick: 'Getting from Here to There'

Ukrainian Centre, 48 Beckett Road,  
Doncaster DN2 4AD.

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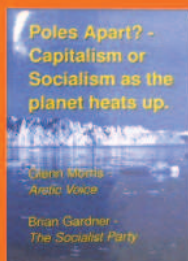
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## socialist party dvd



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## Declaration of Principles

*This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.*

### Object

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

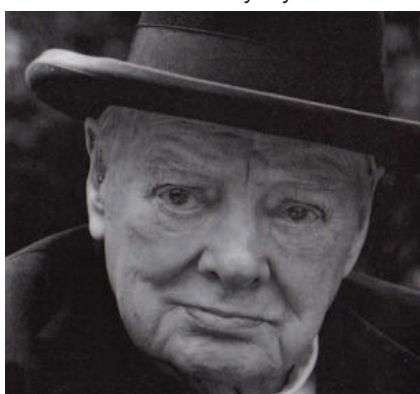


# 50 Years Ago

## Churchill's birthday

HERE, IT was obvious, was what they call a great man. Propped-up, glassy eyed, at the window, flapping his hand at the crowd outside. Oozing in his senility, like the old Disraeli with his corsets and lacquered hair. Famous visitors came and went. An enormous cake was carried in, with sacks full of cards and telegrams. The flashlights popped and the television cameras chirred. Winston Churchill was ninety years old.

Most people were agreed that this was a remarkable achievement. Perhaps it was, in a way. An impressive feature of the many newspaper reminiscences of the old man in his heyday was the



amount of hard liquor which he has put down. One article said that when he was Prime Minister, he drank champagne and brandy with every meal and sipped at tumblers of whisky and soda all through the day. A man of lesser constitution would almost certainly have been killed by such a deluge of alcohol.

Churchill's consumption of drink is typical of the gusto with which he has lived his life, and it is this gusto which has been the subject of much recent hypocrisy. First, the business of those ninety years. It is too obvious that to be born into a family like the Churchills gives a person a built in advantage in their prospects of longevity because, everything else being equal they are going to get the best of everything. The best food. A secure and comfortable home. The best education and, if they want it, an interesting job.

It is a different matter for the people who were cheering so enthusiastically outside Churchill's window on his birthday and it is worthwhile to take a look at how they live. Their lives may be summed up in one word poverty, although it is a different kind from the poverty their parents knew, in the days when Churchill was a young man. They are, first of all, the people who make the wealth of the world.

(from article by Ivan, *Socialist Standard*, January 1965)

# ACTION REPLAY

## Football: the January transfer window

IN EUROPEAN football, the winter transfer window lasts from the 1<sup>st</sup> January - 31<sup>st</sup> January. Football clubs can transfer home based and foreign players into their playing staff. Much a transfer is completed by registering the player into the new club through FIFA.

'Transfer window' is the unofficial term used by the media for 'registration period' as described in the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Player.

Steve Coppell, former manager of Reading called for the transfer window to be scrapped in favour of the previous system, where transfer deals could be made throughout the season. Coppell considered that the transfer window bred panic and encouraged 'scurrilous' transfer activity. Last season, Arsene Wenger the Arsenal manager asked for the January transfer window to be limited to two transfers per window and claimed it is 'unfair' in its current form. Manuel Pellegrini the Manchester City manager backed Wenger by saying that transfer window was unbalanced in favor



of big clubs, and said 'a club with money can take the best players from the other teams'. Rather ironic given that Manchester City are one of the biggest spending clubs in the transfer market.

Arsenal and Manchester City are examples of how supporters help fund their clubs. The cost of a season ticket at Manchester City is £60 whereas at Arsenal it's a staggering £2,113 (*Daily Mirror*, 15 October). A Manchester City football shirt costs £55, while Hull City's retail at £39.99. The overseas fan base of Manchester City, Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool benefit massively from shirts sales in the Far East e.g. Singapore.

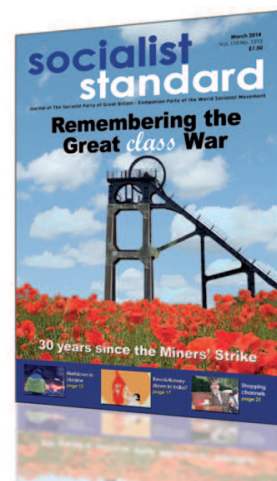
People who complain that footballers in the Premier League are overpaid need to understand that Premiership football is big business where billions of pounds circulate throughout a season. Football under capitalism is shaped by the market, and revenue streams from season and match day tickets contribute to the large financial outlay required annually.

So now we await the latest scramble for 'humanflesh' as clubs argue about a player's value based on goals scored, shots blocked, assists, and clean sheets. All are phrases and statistics in football's lexicon that serve to attribute the 'value' of a human being as a football commodity.

KEVIN

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# Voice from the Back

## A Wasteful Society

The mad wastefulness of capitalism is staggering. Take the expenditure of the USA in their recent military efforts. 'President Barack Obama will ask lawmakers on Friday for an additional \$3.2 billion to pay for the war against the Islamic State group in Iraq officials said Thursday .... The air war in Syria and Iraq - which commanders say could last years - has involved thousands of sorties and hundreds of bombing raids, at a daily cost of \$8.3 million, according to the Pentagon' (*Hindustantimes*, 2 December). This immense expenditure represents a lot of human effort and energy. Think what that could mean inside a socialist society producing food, clothing and shelter for all.

councils attempted to slash costs, has left growing numbers of elderly people without access to the care system. In turn it has forced millions of family members to step in, many of them giving up their own jobs. 'The acute shortage of care for older people in Britain is exposed in official figures showing how the population of care homes was left virtually unchanged during a decade which saw the biggest expansion in the overall elderly population ever. According to a study published by the Office for National Statistics the number of people in care homes in England and

foreigners but just isn't British. So how come a letter discovered in Downing Street at the *National Archives* has placed Britain in the dock at European Court of

Human Rights accused of torturing detainees in Northern Ireland in the 1970s? 'The confidential memo

written in March 1977 by Merlyn Rees, then Labour Home Secretary, states that, six years earlier, Tory ministers had authorised the use of torture in Ulster. Mr Rees told Prime Minister James Callaghan that he thought individuals or soldiers should not be prosecuted because "a political decision was taken" to use the so-called deep interrogation techniques' (*Times*, 6 December). These techniques included wall standing in stress positions, white noise, hooding, sleep deprivation and withholding of food and water.



## Troubles Ahead

Despite the picture the government is trying to draw about how they are coping with the economic crisis, some economic institutions are drawing vastly different conclusions. 'The plans set out by George Osborne in the Autumn Statement on Wednesday will require government spending cuts "on a colossal scale" after the election, an independent forecaster has warned. The *Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)* said just £35bn of cuts had already happened, with £55bn yet to come. The detail of reductions had not yet been spelled out, *IFS* director Paul Johnson said' (*BBC News*, 4 December). The reason for the vagueness about future welfare cuts is of course the approaching election.

Wales rose by only 0.3 per cent in the decade between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, standing at just short of 291,000. But the overall number of over 65s jumped by 11 per cent in the same period - 37 times faster' (*Daily Telegraph*, 6 December). Having suffered a life of exploitation and poverty old workers' misery continues.

## God And Mammon

The Christian churches are adamant that they care nothing for the material aspects of this world and concentrate on spiritual values. The Roman Catholic Church with its new Pope is particularly concerned about its recent past history.

'The Vatican's bank - which he threatened to shut down - is now closing hundreds of suspect accounts as it tries to shrug off its scandalous reputation after decades in which it was a by-word for money laundering and tax evasion' (*Times*, 5 December).

## Capitalism And Cuts

The increasing rationing of state-funded care, as

## A Torturing Society (1)

Torture according to the press is something carried out by unscrupulous

## A Torturing Society (2)

It is not only Britain of the so-called free nations that carries out torture as the US has recently confessed. 'The CIA carried out "brutal" interrogations of al-Qaeda suspects in the years after the 9/11 attacks on the US, a US senate report has said. The summary of the report compiled by Democrats on the Senate Intelligence Committee said that the CIA misled Americans about what it said it was doing' (*BBC News*, 9 December).

## FREE LUNCH

